

The AFCARS Report

Current Estimates as of October 2000 (4)

How many children were in foster care on September 30, 1999? 568,000

SOURCE: Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data submitted for the reporting period 4/1/99 through 9/30/99 (a six-month period).

NOTES: The number of jurisdictions submitting useable foster care data was 45 including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. If a State did not submit data for this reporting period, the total from the most recent submission to AFCARS was used to develop national estimates. Although the percentage distributions within questions have remained relatively constant since the first report (TAR 1), there is considerable variation in the estimated numbers. This is due in part to improvements in the quality of the data and to the use of different estimation procedures. TAR 1 developed estimates using a combination of data from AFCARS and its predecessor the Voluntary Cooperative Information System. In addition, the estimates in this report (TAR 4) include information on events that occurred during this reporting period but were not reported to AFCARS until the next reporting period. If the same adjustment is made to the number of children in care reported in a previous report (TAR 2) the number of children in care on March 31, 1999 would be 578,000 instead of 547,000. The difference between the revised estimate for March 31, 1999 and September 30, 1999 estimate can be substantially accounted for by the high rates of discharges of children from foster care in the summer months. Some percentages do not add up to 100% and/or the estimated numbers do not add up to the total number in the category due to rounding.

What were the ages of the children in foster care?

Mean Yrs	10.0	
Median Yrs	10.1	
< 1 Yr	4%	20,180
1 thru 5 Yrs	25%	140,013
6 thru 10 Yrs	26%	149,595
11 thru 15 Yrs	28%	159,912
16 thru 18 Yrs	16%	88,374
19 + Yrs	2%	9,926

What were the placement settings of children in foster care?

Pre-Adoptive Home	3%	19,463
Foster Family Home (Relative)	26%	150,487
Foster Family Home (Non-Relative)	48%	272,036
Group Home	8%	43,537
Institution	9%	53,534
Supervised Independent Living	1%	4,946
Runaway	1%	7,630
Trial Home Visit	3%	16,368

What were the lengths of stay for the children in foster care?

Mean Months	34	
Median Months	22	
< 1 Month	3%	19,627
1 to 5 Mos	16%	88,741
6 to 11 Mos	14%	77,778
12 to 17 Mos	11%	64,846
18 to 23 Mos	9%	52,370
24 to 29 Mos	8%	43,415
30 to 35 Mos	6%	33,574
3 to 4 Yrs	15%	86,710
5 Yrs or More	18%	100,939

What were the case goals of the children in foster care?

Reunify with Parent(s) or Principal Caretaker(s)	42%	239,090
Live with Other Relative(s)	4%	22,899
Adoption	19%	105,705
Long Term Foster Care	7%	41,123
Emancipation	5%	30,197
Guardianship	4%	22,739
Case Plan Goal Not Yet Established	19%	106,246

**Children in Foster Care on September 30, 1999
(continued)**

What was the race/ethnicity of the children in foster care?

White Non-Hispanic	36%	203,001
Black Non-Hispanic	42%	239,516
Hispanic	15%	84,924
AI/AN Non-Hispanic	2%	8,910
Asian/PI Non-Hispanic	1%	6,304
UnKnown/Unable to Determine	4%	25,346

What was the gender of the children in foster care?

Male	52%	295,547
Female	48%	272,453

NOTE: Using U.S. Bureau of the Census standards, children of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

How many children entered foster care during the period 10/1/98 through 3/31/99? 143,000

What were the ages of the children who entered care during this six-month period?

Mean Yrs	8.6	
Median Yrs	8.5	
< 1 Yr	12%	17,664
1 thru 5 Yrs	26%	36,902
6 thru 10 Yrs	23%	32,687
11 thru 15 Yrs	28%	40,343
16 thru 18 Yrs	11%	15,160
19 + Yrs	—	—

What was the race/ethnicity of the children who entered care during this six-month period?

White Non-Hispanic	46%	65,345
Black Non-Hispanic	31%	44,627
Hispanic	13%	19,132
AI/AN Non-Hispanic	2%	3,110
Asian/PI Non-Hispanic	1%	2,115
Unknown/Unable to Determine	6%	8,671

NOTE: Using U.S. Bureau of the Census standards, children of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

NOTE: "—" represents or rounds to zero.

How many children exited foster care during the period 10/1/98 through 3/31/99? 122,000

What were the ages of the children who exited care during this six-month period?

Mean Yrs	10.3	
Median Yrs	10.4	
< 1 Yr	4%	4,658
1 thru 5 Yrs	25%	31,107
6 thru 10 Yrs	23%	28,439
11 thru 15 Yrs	24%	29,763
16 thru 18 Yrs	21%	25,225
19 + Yrs	2%	2,808

What was the race/ethnicity of the children who exited care during this six-month period?

White Non-Hispanic	45%	55,058
Black Non-Hispanic	33%	40,009
Hispanic	13%	16,461
AI/AN Non-Hispanic	2%	2,696
Asian/PI Non-Hispanic	2%	1,969
UnKnown/Unable to Determine	5%	5,807

NOTE: Using U.S. Bureau of the Census standards, children of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Children who exited foster care (Continued)

What were the lengths of stay of the children who exited foster care during the period 10/1/98 through 3/31/99?

Mean Months	23	
Median Months	12	
< 1 Month	21%	25,239
1 to 5 Mos	16%	20,031
6 to 11 Mos	13%	15,965
12 to 17 Mos	11%	13,013
18 to 23 Mos	8%	9,332
24 to 29 Mos	6%	6,945
30 to 35 Mos	5%	5,518
3 to 4 Yrs	11%	13,158
5 Yrs or More	10%	12,800

What were the outcomes for the children exiting foster care during the period 10/1/98 through 3/31/99?

Reunification with Parent(s) or Primary Caretaker(s)	59%	71,566
Living with Other Relative(s)	9%	11,446
Adoption	16%	19,222
Emancipation	8%	9,627
Guardianship	3%	3,510
Transfer to Another Agency	3%	3,693
Runaway	2%	2,415
Death of Child	0%	228

NOTE: Deaths are attributable to a variety of causes including medical conditions, accidents and homicide.

How many children were waiting to be adopted on September 30, 1999? 118,000

NOTES: Waiting children are identified as children who have a goal of adoption and/or whose parental rights have been terminated. Children 16 years old and older whose parental rights have been terminated and who have a goal of emancipation have been excluded from the estimate.

What is the gender distribution of the waiting children?

Male	52%	61,543
Female	48%	56,457

What is the racial/ethnic distribution of the waiting children?

White Non-Hispanic	32%	38,016
Black Non-Hispanic	50%	58,439
Hispanic	11%	13,000
AI/AN Non-Hispanic	1%	1,506
Asian/PI Non-Hispanic	1%	1,067
UnKnown/Unable to Determine	5%	5,972

NOTE: Using U.S. Bureau of the Census standards, children of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

How old were the waiting children when they were removed from their parents or caretakers?

Mean Yrs	4.2	
Median Yrs	3.3	
less than 1 Yr	29%	34,247
1-5 Yrs	41%	48,466
6-10 Yrs	23%	27,657
11-15 Yrs	6%	7,332
16-18 Yrs	0%	297

How old were the waiting children on September 30, 1999?

Mean Yrs	8.0	
Median Yrs	7.8	
less than 1 Yr	2%	2,403
1-5 Yrs	34%	40,316
6-10 Yrs	37%	43,129
11-15 Yrs	24%	28,126
16-18 Yrs	3%	4,026

Children waiting to be adopted on September 30, 1999 (Continued)

How many months have the waiting children been in continuous foster care?

Mean Months	46	
Median Months	38	
less than 1 month	0%	471
1 through 5 months	3%	3,671
6 through 11 months	5%	6,125
12 through 17 months	8%	9,982
18 through 23 months	10%	11,610
24 through 29 months	10%	12,379
30 through 35 months	10%	11,256
36 through 59 months	26%	30,884
60 or more months	27%	31,622

Where were the waiting children living on September 30, 1999?

Pre-Adoptive Home	14%	16,391
Foster Family Home (Relative)	21%	24,242
Foster Family Home (Non-Relative)	58%	67,979
Group Home	3%	3,227
Institution	5%	5,324
Supervised Independent Living	0%	67
Runaway	0%	380
Trial Home Visit	0%	389

How many children in foster care had their parental rights terminated for all living parents? 46,000

As of September 30, 1999, how many months had elapsed since the parental rights of these foster childre were terminated?

Mean Months	23
Median Months	13

How many children were adopted from the public foster care system in FY1999? 46,000

SOURCE: Adoptions finalized in federal fiscal year 1999, reported to AFCARS by May 15, 2000.

NOTES: The number of jurisdictions reporting useable data was 52 including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The federal fiscal year runs from October 1, 1998 through September 30, 1999. Some percentages do not add up to 100% and/or the estimated numbers do not add up to the total number in the category due to rounding.

What is the gender distribution of the children adopted from the public foster care system?

Male	50%	22,961
Female	50%	23,039

What is the racial/ethnic distribution of the children adopted from the public foster care system?

White Non-Hispanic	39%	18,152
Black Non-Hispanic	43%	19,979
Hispanic	15%	6,734
Asian/PI Non-Hispanic	1%	496
AI/AN Non-Hispanic	1%	639

NOTE: Using U.S. Bureau of the Census standards, children of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Children Adopted in FY 1999 (Continued)

How old were the children when they were adopted from the public foster care system?

Mean Yrs	6.9	
Median Yrs	6.4	
<1 Yr	2%	835
1-5 Yrs	45%	20,758
6-10 Yrs	36%	16,467
11-15 Yrs	15%	6,999
16-18 Yrs	2%	896
19+ Yrs	0%	44

How many months did it take after termination of parental rights for the children to be adopted?

Mean Months	16	
Median Months	12	
<1 Mos	3%	1,503
1-5 Mos	18%	8,453
6-11 Mos	30%	13,849
12-17 Mos	19%	8,773
18-23 Mos	11%	5,062
24-29 Mos	6%	2,906
30-35 Mos	4%	1,733
3-4 Yrs	6%	2,737
5+ Yrs	2%	984

What proportion of the children adopted are receiving an adoption subsidy?

Yes	88%	40,370
No	12%	5,630

What was the relationship of the adoptive parents to the child prior to the adoption?

Non-Relative	20%	9,148
Foster Parent	64%	29,389
Step-Parent	0%	90
Other Relative	16%	7,372

NOTE: Relatives who were also foster parents were counted as relatives.

Adoptive Family Structure

Married Couple	66%	30,224
Unmarried Couple	1%	397
Single Female	31%	14,419
Single Male	2%	960